

**In the Specification:**

**Please replace the Abstract with the following replacement Abstract:**

A method of routing a data packet from a forwarding router to a downstream router. The data packet header includes an address that includes a bit string. The forwarding router looks up, in a forwarding database, a prefix that best matches the bit string. The forwarding router then attaches to the data packet a clue that is related to the best matching prefix, and forwards the data packet to the downstream router. The downstream router looks up, in a downstream database, and with reference to the clue, another prefix that best matches the bit string. Because the databases of neighboring routers are similar, the clue either directly determines the best matching prefix at the downstream router or provides the downstream router with a good starting point for its lookup.